

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9755

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 1072

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, HA

SUBJECT: DUVALIER VISITS ARTIBONITE AND PLATEAU CENTRAL

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. THE PRESS REVEALED MAY 7 THAT PRESIDENT DUVALIER MADE AN INSPECTION VISIT ON MAY 3 TO THE ARTIBONITE VALLEY AND PLATEAU CENTRAL, ESPECIALLY THE ROADS IN AND AROUND MIREBALAIS, LA CHAPELLE, DESARMES, VERRETTES AND LIANCOURT. THEN, BEGINNING AT THE SONDE BRIDGE ON THE NORTH ROAD, DUVALIER MADE A DETAILED INSPECTION OF THE WORK BEING DONE BY THE FRENCH CONTRACTOR, DUMEZ-COLAS, FROM THAT POINT BACK TO PORT-AU-PRINCE. (WORK ON THE IBRD-FINANCED NORTH ROAD PROJECT WAS OFFICIALLY INAUGURATED BY DUVALIER ON OCTOBER 22, 1974 - SEE ITEM 1, PAUP A-171 OF 11/5/74.) END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. DUVALIER HAS BEEN EMERGING FROM THE PALACE WITH INCREASING FREQUENCY EVER SINCE EARLY OCTOBER 1974, WHEN HE AND HIS MITHER MADE AN EMERGENCY INSPECTION OF PORT-AU-PRINCE'S FLOOD DAMAGE. ASIDE FROM HIS NORMAL PUBLIC OUTINGS AT NEW YEARS, DUVALIER HAS ALSO MADE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED VISIT TO A DAMAGED BRIDGE SITE IN THE ARTIBONITE (ITEM 1, PAUP A-24 OF 2/14/75), AND TWICE VISITED VICTIMS OF THE FEB. 27 FIRE IN A PORT-AU-PRINCE SLUM (PAUP 503). IN ADDITION HE CONFIDED TO THE AMBASSADOR THAT RECENTLY HE HAS BEGIN MAKING ANANNOUNCED TRIPS VIRTUALLY INCOGNITO TO THE COUNTRYSIDE IN A JEEP ACCOMPANIED BY ONLY A COUPLE OF BODYGUARDS. DUVALIER SAID HE HAS ENJOYED THESE OUTINGS
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IMMENSELY, ESPECIALLY CHATTING WITH PEASANTS ON A RANDOM BASIS.

3. COMMENT - DUVALIER'S STILL TENTATIVE FORAYS INTO HAITI'S COUNTRYSIDE ARE BUT ANOTHER SIGN OF HIS INCREASING SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SELFASSURANCE AS PRESIDENT, AND A WELCOME OVERRIDING OF HIS SECURITY ADVISORS' RESTRICTIONS ON HIS MOVEMENTS. DUVALIER'S FATHER ALMOST NEVER VENTURED FORTH FROM THE PALACE DUE TO HIS EXCESSIVE CONCERN FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL SECURITY, AND THE PALACE REMAINS IMBUED WITH THIS ATTITUDE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SOME SECURITY ADVISORS WERE DISMAYED BY DUVALIER'S ACCEPTANCE OF PRESIDENT KAUNDA'S INVITATION TO VISIT ZAMBIA (PAUP 981), AND HAVE STRONGLY URGED DUVALIER TO POSTPONE INDEFINITELY THE MAKING OF ANY PLANS FOR AN AFRICAN TRIP. THEY ARE EQUALLY OPPOSED TO DUVALIER VISITING ANY CARIBBEAN COUNTRY. HOWEVER, DUVALIER, WHO WAS RAISED IN THE PALACE, SEEMS TO VALUE ESTABLISHING CONTACT WITH HAITI'S RURAL MASSES AND SEEING SPECIFIC GOH PROJECTS FOR HIMSELF. WE BELIEVE HIS FORAYS WILL CONTINUE, AND MAY EVEN INCREASE BEGINNING IN LATE JULY 1975, WHEN THE SPECIALLY-FITTED SIKORSKY S-58T HELICOPTER DUVALIER ORDERED IS DELIVERED (DIA REPORT NO. 6-840-0040-75 DATED 4/1/75). END CONFIDENTIAL.

THOMSON

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